



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Finance Committee Minutes 03/30/05

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
 MINUTES OF MEETING
 7:30 PM O'NEILL ROOM COMMUNITY SAFETY BUILDING
 3/30/05

ATTENDEES:

McGaffigan*	Fey*	Dunn*	O'Neill*	Mahoney*
DeCoursey*	Connors*	Simmons*		
Tosti*	Foskett*	Deyst	Ronan	
Piandes*	Franclemont*	Jones*	Olsen*	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning		Kneeland*

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Town Treasurer John Bilafer, Town Manager Brian Sullivan, Acting Fire Chief Allan McEwen, Paul Bayer
 MINUTES of 3/28 approved as corrected. Unanimous

ART 22 BYLAW AMENDMENT/NEWSRACKS: Bilafer does not need an appropriation. Kneeland to confirm that the BOS will report.

ART 31 REVOLVING FUND/PARKING PROGRAM: Bilafer has been forced to waive parking fines when "no parking" spaces are not clearly marked. Working w/ Selectman Hurd, he believes this problem will be addressed. He expects to get a map showing all the prohibited parking places in town. VOTED no action. Unanimous. The report will comment about why.

ART 35 COMMITTEE/PRIVATE WAYS PROCEDURES: Bilafer is working w/ Town Counsel & Public Works Director to develop written procedures so that costs of repairs can be collected more effectively. Sullivan to confirm that BOS will report.

ART 51 PENSION ADJUSTMENT FOR RETIREES: Bilafer explained that this is the annual article which authorizes a pension increase on the first \$12k of a former employee who had worked for the town at least 25yrs if that person's pension had fallen below half of the person who holds the retiree's former position. The adjustment would bring the pension to half of the reference salary. Bilafer stated that this article costs the town less than \$5k additional each year. When asked the impact on the fully funded date he did not know. VOTED favorable action. Unanimous. Foskett to follow up.

ART 56 TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT TREASURER'S SYSTEMS: Bilafer was concerned in December that he might not be able to get the property tax bill out in time because of software problems. He agreed that the next step should be to discuss the problem with ITAC. VOTED no action. Dunn to follow up.

ART 61 HEALTH CARE TRUST FUND: Bilafer & Tosti recommended continuing to contribute the difference between \$500k and the current non-contributory pensions to this fund which is now at about \$1m vs a retiree health care liability of almost \$80m. Bilafer is considering additional approaches to funding this liability. VOTED \$211572. Unanimous.

ART 62 TIP FEE STABILIZATION FUND: VOTED to transfer \$400k to the DPW budget. Unanimous.

ART 63 TRANSFER FUNDS TO CEMETERY: Olsen & Foskett to check what funds are available.

ART 64 OVERLAY SURPLUS: The Assessors annually declare a portion of the Overlay, funds reserved for abatements, surplus. VOTED to transfer \$400k to town budgets. Unanimous.

ART 65 STABILIZATION FUND: VOTED no action. Unanimous.

ART 68 TRANSFER FUNDS FROM BUILDING INSURANCE FUND TO STABILIZATION FUND: The legislature approve a home rule petition from last year's town meeting to allow transfer of excess funds. VOTED to transfer \$1.5m. Unanimous.

ART 66 FREE CASH: VOTED to apply \$1614155, half the certified free cash, to town budgets. Unanimous. This action reduces the need to borrow in anticipation of tax payments & helps maintain our bond rating.

FIRE BUDGET & PARK CIRCLE FIRE STATION: Sullivan & McEwen provided handouts and defended the budgets. McEwen proposed an 85 person fire department in place of the current 76 positions. His plan would add 1 DC, delete 3 LTs, and add 11 FFs. He does not know the cost impact. Sullivan agrees the dept is top heavy and would correct this by attrition. He does not think the increased size can be funded. McEwen stated that the 4 person standard is satisfied by sending at least 2 units to a fire. Sullivan believes the town has no legal liability since 3 people/ unit is common in MA.

. Sullivan stated that closing Park Circle Fire Station would mean a loss of service. The handouts contained aggregated response times which could not be used to support this statement. There was no data on simultaneous calls. McEwen stated that the extra bay at Park Circle might be used for regional equipment. Some regionalization is being discussed by the Boston area fire chiefs. There is a plan for regional dispatch centers. He said this is the only path to cost reduction. Sullivan was receptive to considering relocating the Highland station to the town yard, though disturbing the contaminated soil might be a constraint. He was less enthusiastic about using the State garage on Rt 2 saying that the State might sell it after the Town paid for modifications. McEwen suggested selling the central station & building a smaller facility as an option.

RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$257,500

COMMITTEE: Fey volunteered to advise the student FinCom on Student Government Day Thurs 4/28. Chair requested SubComs to remind Clerk, Comptroller, Schools, BOS to provide cuts if no override. No mtg week starting Sun 4/12.

Peter B Howard Secretary 3/29/05

cc Selectmen, FinCom Members, Town Manager, Library File, Town Web Site FinCom Web Site